

**STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
DOVER, DELAWARE**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2017**

The September monthly meeting of the Delaware State Human Relations Commission was held by video-conference the Cannon Building, 861 Silver Lake Boulevard, Conference Room A, Dover, Delaware; and the Carvel Building, 820 N. French Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor SOS Conference Room, Wilmington, Delaware.

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**Attendance:**

**Commission Members Present:** Chairperson Calvin Christopher; Commissioners Jamaal Bivens, Diaz Bonville, Chok-Fun Chui, Bernice Edwards, Earnest Gulab, Doug James, Prameela Kaza, Nancy Maihoff, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Olga Ramirez, Walter Smith Jr., Roy Sudler Jr., Robert Watson Jr. and Dolores Finger Wright. DAG Zoe Plerhoples.

**Commission Members not present:** Commissioners Mashoor Awad (excused), Whittona Burrell (excused), Erika Caesar (unexcused), Kerri Harris (excused), Jordan Hines (unexcused), Gail Launay-Tarlecki (excused) and Rosemarie Williams (excused).

**Staff from Division of Human Relations Office:** Romona Fullman, Vincent Petroff, and Kelly Fox.

**Members of the public present:** Sara Herbert and Ted Henderson (Dover Human Relations Commission).

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**I Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Christopher at 5:37 p.m. followed by a period of silent meditation.

**II Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for the June SHRC meeting were submitted. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Commissioner Olga Ramirez. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Robert Watson Jr. A vote was taken, motion carries with no opposition.

The minutes for the August SHRC meeting were submitted. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. Motion were seconded by Commissioner Earnest Gulab. A vote was taken, motion carries with no opposition.

**III Members of the Public Present:** Sara Herbert read a statement from the Dover Human Relations Commission (DHRC) requesting to establish a liaison with the State Human Relations Commission. Chair Calvin Christopher thanked the representatives from the Dover Human Relations Commission for attending this evening. He requested that Sara Herbert provide a copy of the written statement that was read to Kelly Brown. He also indicated he will be reaching out to a Commissioner in Kent County to work with the Dover Human Relations Commission to reach their goals. Action: Appoint SHRC member as a liaison to DHRC.

#### IV Chair's Report

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
<p><b><u>Update Joint Legislative Oversight Sunset Committee</u></b> – Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. advised Chair Calvin Christopher following his statement on this matter he has some questions concerning this matter.</p> <p>Chair Calvin Christopher reported that efforts will continue to look for videoconference capabilities in Sussex County as per the Joint Legislative Oversight Sunset Committee recommendations.</p> <p>Chair Calvin Christopher advised that the Legislative Committee is working on updating the by-laws to outline the process by which the Commission will elect Chair, DAG Zoe Plerhoples advised that DAG Carla Jarosz is working with Commissioner Kerri Harris to develop the revisions to the by-laws.</p> <p>Chair Calvin Christopher advised that under the Joint Legislative Oversight Sunset Committee recommendations the size of the Commission will be reduced to 18. Once the recommendation was made he has received early retirement notifications from Commissioners Stephen Elkins, Michael J. Harpe, and Janet Maull-Martin. Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. has previously stated that he will be resigning when his term is completed in December. Additionally</p>	<p>Identify videoconferencing sites in Sussex County</p> <p>Review and update SHRC By-laws</p>	<p>Kelly Brown</p> <p>Commissioner Kerri Harris, Chair, Legislative Committee, DAG</p>	

<p>Commissioner Rose Mary Hendrix has submitted her resignation due to health reasons. Chair Calvin Christopher shared that he does not plan to serve out his term; however he plans to be of assistance in transition and Commission size reduction. Attendance and participation in Commission/Division events will be a factor going forward. The Commission has one year from the date of enactment to reach the goal of 18.</p> <p>Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. posed several questions to Chair Calvin Christopher concerning the minutes from 2.18.17 and 3.18.17 Joint Legislative Oversight Sunset Committee public hearing minutes (written submission of his questions attached as Exhibit A).</p> <p>SHRC engaged in significant discussion in response to Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr.'s questions. Summary of Questions &amp; Responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Reduction of number of Commissioners to 18:</u> Chair Walsh of the JLOSC asked Chair Calvin Christopher what would be a fair reduction in members of the HRC. Chair Calvin Christopher replied 18 Commissioners. Although, the full body discussed the number of SHRC members that would be appropriate and the SHRC formed an Ad Hoc Committee to discuss the JLOSC's recommendations, Chair Calvin Christopher and Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. disagreed on whether the full body of the SHRC voted to recommend to the JLOSC a reduction to 18 members. Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. requested information from Division staff on the motion and the vote on this matter. A statement was</li> </ul>	<p>Monitor SHRC Commissioner community engagement</p>	<p>Chair Christopher and Kelly Brown</p>	
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<p>made that the approved minutes from the meetings in question had previously been provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Death Penalty</u>: Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. expressed his concern that Chair Calvin Christopher, in response to a question from Representative Dukes of the JLOSC regarding the HRC's position on the death penalty referenced the interest of various stakeholders, like the ACLU and the Fraternal Order of Police, both of whom appeared before the SHRC, but did not specify that the SHRC, itself, voted to support the death penalty repeal as a body. The SHRC acknowledged his concerns and confirmed that no other Commissioners felt disrespected.</li> <li>• <u>Audio/Additional Concerns</u>: DAG Zoe Plerhoples stated that she advised Chair Calvin Christopher and Director Romona Fullman throughout the review. DAG Plerhoples is available for any additional questions/discussion by email or phone. Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. requested the audio recording of the 2.8.17 and 3.8.17 be provided to the Commission as a whole. DAG Zoe Plerhoples will reach out to Julie Fedele for the process for this.</li> </ul>	<p>Request audio recording of the 2/8/17 and 3/8/17 JLOSC meetings w/SHRC</p>	<p>DAG Zoe Plerhoples</p>	
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<p><b><u>Commission Committee Assignments-</u></b> Chair Calvin Christopher reported that the Public Awareness Committee still needs a Chair. He also expressed there is a need to create a relationship with print media outlets. Also, when suggestions are made that the Commission write a letter, a process should be developed of who should write the letter, what should be included in the letter and who is should be sent to.</p>	<p>Develop relationship with print media.</p> <p>Develop process for press releases and letters.</p>	<p>Public Awareness Committee</p> <p>Public Awareness Committee</p>	<p>Undefined</p> <p>Undefined</p>
<p><b><u>Homeless Bill of Rights (SB 49) –</u></b> Chair Calvin Christopher reported initially the intention was to invite Senator Townsend to a Commission meeting to discuss the bill.</p>	<p>Invite Senator Townsend to Commission meeting</p>	<p>Commissioner Kerri Harris</p>	<p>Undefined</p>
<p><b><u>Aftermath of Charlottesville -</u></b> Chair Calvin Christopher stated that an infrastructure should be developed on issuing statements on matters aligned with the Commission’s purpose.</p>	<p>Develop process for press releases and letters.</p>	<p>Public Awareness Committee</p>	<p>Undefined</p>
<p><b><u>Joint Letter in Support of a Statewide Safe Communities Policy -</u></b> Chair Calvin Christopher advised that a letter is included in the Commissioner information this evening concerning Joint Letter of Statewide Safe Communications Policy. Following discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Roy Sudler Jr. to issue a letter of support of for the Statewide Safe Communities Policy. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Robert Watson Jr. Following a discussion a vote was taken. All in favor. No opposition. Motion carries.</p>	<p>Issue a letter of support of for the Statewide Safe Communities Policy</p>	<p>Undefined</p>	<p>Undefined</p>

## V Director's Report

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
<p>Director Romona Fullman drew attention to the Statistical Report in the Commissioners information. She encouraged Commissioners to review the report for case updates. Vincent Petroff expressed some of the challenges being faced due to staff shortages.</p> <p>Vincent Petroff expressed that if the Homeless Bill of Rights is passed and the Division is given the enforcement of this bill.</p> <p>Vincent Petroff stated that there are some cases that will be proceeding to hearings. Those will be communicated when scheduled.</p>	Review Human Relations Statistical Report	All Commissioners	Ongoing
<p>Director Romona Fullman shared that Office for Commission for Women was closed on July 1<sup>st</sup>. With the closure the Division of Human Relations budget was reduced. Director Romona Fullman discussed some of the challenges that are being experience with the reduction. She encouraged Commissioners to attend the upcoming budget hearing on November 6<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Director Romona Fullman shared that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act will be occurring in 2018.</p> <p>Commissioner Nancy Maihoff shared she would be meeting with Representative Brian Bushweller next week. She advised she will contact Director Romona Fullman to obtain relevant financial information that she can take to the meeting to discuss.</p> <p>Director Romona Fullman advised that she has been in contact with the Secretary of State Office to discuss the need for additional funding. She requested Committees provide her with activities and estimated</p>	<p>Attend budget hearing</p> <p>Meet with Representative Brian Bushweller</p> <p>Identify activities and estimated costs</p>	<p>All available Commissioners</p> <p>Commissioner Nancy Maihoff</p> <p>All Committees</p>	<p>Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Undefined</p> <p>Undefined</p>

costs they would like to do.			
Director Romona Fullman received communications from USDOJ Community Relations Service Conciliation Specialist suggesting that based on the recent string of events; Wilmington might be ready for a community task force to prevent Hate Crimes.	Follow up conversation with Susanne Buchanan	Director Romona Fullman	Undefined
Director Romona Fullman thanked Commissioner Olga Ramirez for setting up a conversation with a member of the community to discuss their experience with racism.			
Director Romona Fullman advised that she will discuss the Hispanic Festival with Claudia Sosa-Ducote' to determine if the Division will participate this weekend.	Communicate Hispanic Festival participation to Commissioners	Director Romona Fullman	Undefined

## VI Committee Reports

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
<p><b><u>Public Awareness Committee (PAW)</u></b> – Chair Calvin Christopher reported this Committee is still in need of a Chair</p> <p>Commissioner Douglas James shared that there is another segment scheduled on September 22. He is looking for a volunteer for the segment. He requested Commissioner Dolores Finger Wright to participate. She agreed.</p> <p>Commissioner Jamaal Bivens inquired if a Commissioner participating in a Comcast Newsmakers segment needs the approval of the Commission as a body. DAG Zoe Plerhoples shared that if a Commissioner is stating the position of the Commission as a whole the item would have to be</p>	Film Comcast Newsmaker's segment	Commissioner Douglas James	Friday, September 22

voted on and approved. However if the Commissioner can provided their own opinions without a Commission vote.			
<b><u>Legislative Committee (LEG)</u></b> – DAG Zoe Plerhoples shared that she and Carla have been working with Commissioner Kerri Harris on the revisions of the Commission by-laws.			
<b><u>Community Response Committee (CRC)</u></b> – Commissioner Maihoff reported the Committee did not have a meeting. However Committee continues working on the Mentoring Manual.  Commissioner Nancy Maihoff shared an article concerning Restaurants for patrons in wheelchairs. A discussion took place concerning the article.  Commissioner Douglas James inquired about a previous case that was before the Commission with a similar topic at a restaurant named Irish Eyes.	Research prior case	Director Romona Fullman	Undefined
<b><u>Governor’s Council on Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (GCEEO)</u></b> – Chair Christopher reported that this GCEEO has been placed under the Diversity and Inclusion Office under the Department of Human Resources. The future of the GCEEO under the Division of Human Relations is unclear at this time. Commissioner Bernice Edwards stated she would like someone from the Diversity and Inclusion office to speak to the Commission to discuss the future of this Committee.	Request a representative for the Diversity and Inclusion office come speak to the Commission.	Chair Calvin Christopher	Undefined

## VII Old Business



<b><i>Topic / Discussion</i></b>	<b><i>Actions to be Taken</i></b>	<b><i>Leader</i></b>	<b><i>Due Date</i></b>
<p>Commissioner Robert Watson Jr. reported that an accounting of the funds in the Commission's Sunshine Fund is included in the information provided to the Commissioners.</p> <p>DAG Zoe Plerhoples thanked the Commissioners for the gift and card that was sent following the birth of her child.</p> <p>Kelly Brown confirmed that cards were mailed to Commissioners Rose Mary Hendrix and Rosemarie Williams.</p> <p>Commissioner Douglas James shared that Commissioner Gail Launay-Tarlecki had surgery today.</p> <p>Commissioner Douglas James shared that former Commissioner Stephen Elkins is experiencing health issues.</p>			

## **VIII New Business**

<b><i>Topic / Discussion</i></b>	<b><i>Actions to be Taken</i></b>	<b><i>Leader</i></b>	<b><i>Due Date</i></b>
Commissioner Jamaal Bivens inquired if the Public Awareness Committee has established a Facebook page for the Commission. He was advised that the Division has a Facebook page. Commissioners can submit items to Annette Fletcher and Ines Hungria to be shared.	Send link to the Division's Facebook page	Director Romona Fullman	Undefined
Commissioner Dolores Finger Wright inquired about trainings for new Commissioners.	Training is being developed	Director Romona Fullman	Undefined
Commissioner Nancy Maihoff made recommendation was made that a law to support Human Relations Commission's mediation agreements should be	Contact Legislative Committee	Commissioner Nancy Maihoff	Undefined

developed. Chair Calvin Christopher requested that Commissioner Maihoff contact the Legislative Committee.			
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## **IX Good News**

<b><i>Topic / Discussion</i></b>	<b><i>Actions to be Taken</i></b>	<b><i>Leader</i></b>	<b><i>Due Date</i></b>
Vincent Petroff reminded Commissioners that the Veterans Stand Down is Friday, September 22 <sup>nd</sup> at Schutte Park.			
Commissioner Edwards shared the First State Community Action Agency will be having their 52 <sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Dinner in November at Dover Downs. An invitation will be sent to Commissioners.			

## **XI Meeting Adjourned**

The Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m. by Chair Christopher.